

02-277

From: Charles W Rhodes
To: Kathleen Abernathy
Date: Wed, Feb 12, 2003 1:52 AM
Subject: Democracy and media ownership restrictions.

Dear **Ms.** Abernathy,
Please vote against the relaxing of media ownership laws.

Please do not allow the robber-barons of media to further consolidate media ownership in America. This cannot be good for democracy, and it is your job to guard against the tyranny of a situation where all significant America media is in the hands of a few billionaires.

Below is a letter I've sent to many in Congress.

Thanks You

Chuck Rhodes

The FCC is about to change the rules that limit the ability of a single entity to own multiple media outlets in a given region or market.

These rules were created in the **40's** in order to prevent a small group of people from monopolizing our media. Of course, for the most part, it's too late. But to allow the FCC to do undo these last remaining safeguards would be a great **loss** to our stability and security.

We need many more voices in our democracy. Currently, 10 wealthy corporations own 90% of the media capacity in the **US**. It is not an exaggeration to say that the ultra wealthy already control what most people hear. And these ultra wealthy are the same people giving large political contributions and getting people elected to office - to do their bidding.

So, when too few voices dominate, the media are unresponsive to complaints about the federal government, and unwilling to take up legitimate causes and inquiries that challenge the federal government.

When the media do not question and appropriately embarrass the federal government, the government becomes unresponsive to citizens and increasingly corrupt. The media and government are already unresponsive to very legitimate, widely held grievances.

When grievances go unaddressed, resentment, alienation and disenfranchisement build. The result is often instability and violence - or as in our current situation; egregious spin, omission, distraction and intimidation from an increasingly monolithic media-government. Of course this deception will only hold back public resentment temporarily.

And the situation is going from bad to worse

The Bush administration is systematically dismantling the checks and balances necessary for our democracy to work:

There is a blatant sell-out of our federal government to big industry. (Enron wrote our national energy policy; pharmaceuticals get the Congress to maximize their profits, the feds install a Unocal executive as president of Afghanistan to insure success of a new pipeline, etc.)

There's the abuse of secrecy (Cheney's Enron notes, permanent impoundment of presidential papers).

There are the foxes in the henhouses (Gale Norton, Harvey Pitt, John Poindexter, Henry Kissinger, etc)

There are the Religious extremists in positions of great power (Ashcroft, Rumsfeld, Carl Rove, Bush himself, etc.).

There are the blatant conflicts of interests (Bush and the Carlyle Group; Cheney and Haliburton, etc.).

There is the intimidation of Congress through warmongering,

There is the ongoing packing of judicial positions with strident pro-wealth political allies

There is the widespread placement of religious ideologues into government/council positions of great scientific authority.

There is the widespread placement of religious ideologues into important policy making positions, especially with regard to women's' health and reproductive matters.

There is systematic intimidation and disenfranchisement of minority voters (The Florida "felon"-purge, misinforming and intimidation of Florida and other southern minorities, voting machine fraud, etc.)

There is intentional creation of federal budget deficits **so** that later deep cuts in Social Security, Medicare, and all social programs will seem unavoidable. This is deliberate deception by the Executive and Legislative branches

There is the proposed Faith-Based Charity program which would give government money to churches, surely to include the Democrat-hating Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and Sun Myung Moon, a big Bush family benefactor. So the wall of separation between church and state will be undermined.

There is increased spying on American citizens - in the past, these spying frenzies have turned into operations focusing on political dissidents.

There is the erosion of habeas corpus, and the recent decision of the FISA court to allow federal spying on citizens for domestic matters as well as the traditional foreign matters. This gives Ashcroft a secretive way around the traditional court system for obtaining warrants - no public record.

And of course, there are the thousands of right-wing radio programs, spreading hatred and intolerance toward anyone who espouses a compassionate or progressive social agenda, and spurring death threats against outspoken liberals. We need the FCC to strengthen and enforce ownership rules and start looking for other ways to foment diversity and civility in our airwaves. The equal time law has been abandoned, and needs to be reinstated.

Don't you realize where all this abuse of power is leading? Do you have the conviction and courage to stand for what is right, like the late Paul Wellstone?

The wealthy cannot lead this nation by themselves. Their attempt to do **so** will end in disaster unless people in positions of authority and power begin to turn the tide back toward real democracy. It will take courage and conviction to re-establish democracy, and it will take many dedicated people with these qualities. But the spiritual rewards will be great for those who take up this most honorable of causes.

I am a 48-year-old 21-year employee of Public Service of Colorado (Xcel Energy), make over **\$100k** per year, and am an influential voice in my community. I was an architect of Xcel's Windsource program and of the Renewable Energy Trust. I have won Denver-wide awards for music composition and theatre work. I have two children plus a wife, I own two guns, own a home plus a separate 35-acre parcel of mountain land, drive a pick-up truck, do carpentry, believe in a higher power, give money to homeless individuals, and I vote in every election.

Speak up against this unraveling of our democracy (any aspect of it), bolster what remains of our safeguards against tyranny, and I'll speak up for you!

I demand my democracy back!

Respectfully, Sincerely and Urgently,

Chuck Rhodes

Denver

From: Charles W Rhodes
To: Commissioner Adelstein
Date: Wed, Feb 12, 2003 2:01 AM
Subject: democracy and media ownership restrictions

EX PARTE OR LAT^{RE} FILED

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